

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 16, 2014*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, January 9; Friday, January 10; and Monday, January 13, 2014, I was unable to be present for recorded votes.

Had I been present, I would have voted: "yes" on rollcall vote No. 7 (on the Sinema Amendment to H.R. 2279); "yes" on rollcall vote No. 8 (on the Tonko Amendment to H.R. 2279); "yes" on rollcall vote No. 9 (on the motion to recommit H.R. 2279 with instructions); "no" on rollcall vote No. 10 (on passage of H.R. 2279); "no" on rollcall vote No. 11 (on passage of H.R. 3811); "yes" on rollcall vote No. 12 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1513), and "yes" on rollcall vote No. 13 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass S. 230).

ALLEVIATING HUNGER IN  
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 16, 2014*

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I submit an article that appeared recently in *The Boston Globe* about innovative work being done to help alleviate hunger in developing countries using safe storage technologies.

[From the *Boston Globe*, Dec. 17, 2013]FOR PHIL VILLERS, HELPING FEED THE WORLD  
IS IN THE BAG

(By Bella English)

CONCORD.—Phil Villers has founded several high-tech companies, but the one he oversees now offers something much more basic: a way to alleviate hunger in developing countries. GrainPro, Inc., which Villers runs out of Concord, makes airtight, impermeable bags of polyvinylchloride, similar to the material used by the Israeli Army to protect its tanks in the desert heat.

The bags are critical because about one-fourth of grain products grown in developing countries or shipped to them—rice, peanuts, maize, seeds, beans—are lost to insects or rodents, or rot in cloth or jute storage bags.

GrainPro's "cocoons" are made of the same material as the company's bags, and serve as huge "ultra-hermetic" encasings for grain bags. They can reduce grain losses from 25 percent to less than 1 percent, Villers says, and the company concentrates on hot and humid countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

"The insects suffocate, and the rats can't get a tooth-hold," says Villers, who joined GrainPro as a board member in 1996 and took over shortly after, when the company's president was injured in a car accident.

"We eliminate the need for pesticides, and we can protect food supplies against all kinds of calamities such as typhoons and earthquakes," Villers says.

"We eliminate the need for pesticides, and we can protect food supplies against all kinds of calamities such as typhoons and earthquakes."

During Typhoon Haiyan, which recently devastated the Philippines, the rice, cocoa, and seeds stored inside the cocoons were protected. In fact, GrainPro's products are all made at a factory on the former US Naval Base at Subic Bay, 75 miles from Manila.

"The cocoons are massively solid when filled with bags," Villers says. "They're like a brick outhouse. They just don't move."

The bags and cocoons are used in 97 countries, from small villages to national food authorities. Villers deals with the US Agency for International Development, the World Bank, and other agencies and private companies. "We know that there are over 100 million people who don't have enough to eat in Africa alone," he says.

GrainPro is, as he calls it, a "not-only-for-profit" company. "We take our social mission very seriously," he says. "But to be successful we have to be profitable, and we are. We're growing at 50 percent a year." The smaller bags sell for \$2 to \$3 each, while the cocoons start at \$1,000. The company is developing a thinner, cheaper line of cocoons.

One of their biggest customers is the Ghana Cocoa Board, and in Rwanda, hundreds of cocoons are protecting corn, seeds, and rice.

GrainPro also has a minor market of coffee growers and roasters in the United States. "We tell them we can't change bad coffee to good coffee, but we can make sure your good coffee stays good," says Villers.

The walls of Villers's small office bear some health care posters and awards. The staff consists of him, an administrative assistant, and a financial manager. In Washington, there's a vice president for food security.

The rest of the 125 employees are in the Philippines, in research and development, and production.

Martin Gummert is a senior scientist with the International Rice Research Institute, a nonprofit headquartered in the Philippines and dedicated to improving the yield and quality of rice in poor countries. The agency has collaborated with GrainPro to develop the grain bags.

"GrainPro is a company with a big social conscience," says Gummert. "They started small, promoting hermetic storage against many odds in the initial years."

That his company is doing well while doing good makes Villers a happy man. "I love what I do and I'm trying very hard to make sure my life counts, not just to me and my family," he says.

Philippe Villers was 5 years old when he fled Paris with his family two hours ahead of the German Army. His father, a member of the French Army, left for London disguised as a Polish officer. Once there, he joined the resistance.

Philippe, his sister, and mother headed to the safety of Montreal. After the war, the family was reunited and moved to New York. At age 10, Philippe became a US citizen, and his life since then has unfolded like an immigrant version of the American Dream.

He graduated with honors from Harvard and earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering from MIT. He founded companies and made good money. Long a social activist, he put his money where his mouth was.

In 1982, Villers and his wife, Kate, started the nonprofit Families USA Foundation, dedicated to achieving quality health care for all Americans, and they've been cited by President Obama for their work.

Kate Villers is also the president and founder of the foundation's sister organization, Community Catalyst, a nonprofit work-

ing in more than 40 states to build support for improved health care and insurance rights.

The couple, who live in Concord, apparently have passed along their helping hands philosophy to their daughters. Their oldest runs a foundation in Costa Rica to improve preschool education for poor children. Their youngest is executive director of the Mass. Senior Action Council, a nonprofit grassroots group of senior citizens fighting for social justice. Their son, who is in the film business, lives in Budapest.

Though he can talk on and on about his pet subjects—alleviating hunger, providing affordable health care—Villers is less talkative about himself. He's not interested in discussing the motives behind his do-good work.

"My lifelong goal has been to make a difference in this country," he simply says. Is it because of the opportunities the United States provided an immigrant boy? "I'll leave that to psychologists," he adds, with a bemused half-grin.

He won't even give his age, but will say that he graduated from Harvard in 1955, along with David Halberstam, "a great guy."

Villers is a member of the ACLU's President's Council and the executive director's leadership council of Amnesty International. He describes himself as "a change agent and a human rights activist."

Just don't ask him why.

## TRIBUTE TO DR. RONALD BAKARI

**HON. TOM LATHAM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, January 16, 2014*

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the achievements of Dr. Ronald Bakari of West Des Moines, Iowa for receiving a coveted Fulbright award to promote a stronger global understanding abroad this academic year.

The Fulbright Program is sponsored by the United States Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. This program is known as America's flagship international exchange program. First established by Congress in 1946, the Fulbright Program has served the purpose of building mutual understanding between American citizens and the rest of the world. Appropriations from the United States Congress, participating foreign governments, and private sector contributions fund the Fulbright Program. The program has exchanged over a quarter of a million people in more than 155 countries, since its inception. Ronald's host country for the 2013–2014 academic year is the United Kingdom.

To receive a Fulbright award is truly a great honor. Recipients of this award must demonstrate significant leadership potential in their chosen field and are selected on the basis of their academic or professional achievement. The experiences provided by this program ensure that tomorrow's leaders are both knowledgeable about the world and well-rounded.

Mr. Speaker, it is a profound honor to represent leaders like Dr. Bakari from the great state of Iowa in the United States Congress. I know my colleagues in the House will join me in congratulating him for receiving this prestigious award and I wish him the best of luck as he continues his career excellence.